

Message Text

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TAGS: OEXC LE (AS SADR, MUSA SADR AL DIN)

SUBJ: FY74 IV NOMINATION OF MUSA AS SADR

REF: STATE 169184

1. SHIITE IMAM MUSA AS SADR DELIGHTED AT NEWS HE TENTATIVELY AWARDED 30DAY IV GRANT TO VISIT U.S. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS AND OTHER COMMITMENTS DURING MONTH OF RAMADAN, FOLLOWED BY PROJECTED TRIP TO EGYPT, SCHEDULED VISIT TO HOLY PLACES DURING HAJJ, AND NEED TO BE PRESENT FOR MUHARRAM OBSERVANCES IN LEBANON IN JA, HE UNABLE TRAVEL TO US UNTIL MID-FEB 74. WE INFIRMED HIM WE WOULD COORDINATE WITH DEPT AND NOTIFY HIM FORMALLY OF AWARD ASAP.

2. SADR IS PERSONALLY PLEASED AT PROSPECT OF OFFICIAL VISIT TO US (HE COMMENTED SEVERAL TIMES HE WILL BE FIRST LEBANESE SHI'S MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADER TO DO SO IN LIVING MEMORY). HE EVEN MORE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT POSITIVE EFFECTS HIS VISIT CAN HAVE ON LARGE SHITTE COMMUNITY HERE, MOST OF WHICH CONCENTRATED IN SOUTH. HE PARTICULARLY HOPEFUL THAT AS RESULT OF CONTACTS WITH LEADING USG OFFICIALS (INCLUDING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS) HE CAN RETURN WITH RENEWED ASSURANCES OF IMPORTANCE USG ATTACHES TO TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF ALL RPT ALL OF LEBANON.

3. AS FOR OTHER ASPECTS OF HIS PROGRAM, SADR WOULD HOPE TO VISIT VARIOUS LOCALITIES IN WHICH LEBANESE-AMERICAN COMMUNITY IS CONCENTRATED AND BE RECEIVED BY ITS BUSINESS, RELIGIOUS (ESPECIALLY SHI'A) AND CULTURAL LEADERS. MOST OF THIS WOULD, OF COURSE, BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARRANGED PRIVATELY WITHOUT NEED OF USG ASSISTANCE. HE ALSO INTERESTED

IN VISITING ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS IN US, AS WELL AS NUMBER OF IMPORTANT UNIVERSITIES, MUSEUMS AND HISTORIC SITES. IN ADDITION, HE WOULD APPRECIATE OPPORTUNITY TO TOUR RURAL DEVELOPMENT; VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROJECTS (IN CONNECTION WITH IMPORTANT ASPECT OF HIS WORK IN SOUTH LEBANON) AND US SPECE CENTER.

4. SADR ALSO MENTIONED LIKELIHOOD THAT ONE OF TWO PERSONS (E.G., HIS SECRETARY) MIGHT ACCOMPANY HIM AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE, AND ASKED IF THEY COULD BE INCLUDED IN ADMIN AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS WORKED OUT FOR HIS PROGRAM BY USG. WE INDICATED THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE, ALTHOUGH WE EMPHASIZED USG'S ABILITY PROVIDE ALL TRANSLATION AND GUIDE SERVICES HE WILL NEED DURING VISIT.

3. COMMENT; EMB PLEASED BY SADR'S POSITIVE RESPONSE AND EAGERNESS TO ACCEPT IV AWARED. WE TRUST FEB-MAR TIMING OF HIS VISIT WILL PRESENT NO PROBLEM, AND WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT'S CONFIRMATION OF THIS POINT (AS WELL AS ANY DETAILED INFO RE DEPT 'S IDEAS ABOUT SCHEDULE AND ITINERARY) TO RELAY TO SADR SOONEST. FINALLY, IN VIEW OF IMPORTANCE SADR'S VISIT IN CONNECTION WITH PROMOTION OF US IMAGE AND IINTERESTS IN LEBANON (BEIRUT A-146, AUG 8, 73), WE HOPE DEPT WILL DEVOTE PARTICULAR CARE TO ORGANIZING HIS ITINERARY AND FACILITATING CONTACTS AS OUTLINED ABOVE. DECON 9/25/74.
HOUGHTON

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